

INDIAN DEED TO NORTHWEST ARLINGTON

JANUARY 13, 1639

SQUAW SACHEM AND WEBCOWITT TO
JOTHAM GIBBONS.

This is the original deed to a large part of what is now Arlington, Massachusetts. In the year 1639 Squaw Sachem and her husband Webcowitt gave a promise that the last land they possessed would go to the son of an old friend after Squaw Sachem's death. There was no money involved, neither was there any mention of fur coats, wampum, or bushels of corn. Squaw Sachem died in 1650.


Squaw Sachem had previously sold much land to the town of Charlestown for 21 coats, 19 fathoms of wampum, three bushels of corn, and two additional coats each year so long as she lived. This other land lay east of the Mystic lakes between Watertown and Salem, Massachusetts.

Major Edward Gibbons had been a friend of Squaw Sachem. Out of love and respect for that relationship, she made a gift of the land lying within the northwest corner of Arlington and the southern part of Winchester. The approximate bounds in Arlington are from where Mill Brook empties into Mystic Lakes, Mystic Lakes shores, Winchester boundary, Lexington boundary, Summer street to Mystic street, then Mill Brook itself to the starting point.


Middlesex County Court Files, held by Massachusetts Archives at
Columbia Point, Morrissey Blvd., Boston, Massachusetts, April 1989.

1661/2 - folio 29 - group 4

Be it knowne unto all men by these presents, that wee Webcowitt
& the Squa Sachem of Misticke, wife of the said Webcowit,
calling to mind & well considering the many kindnesses &
benefits we have received from the hands of Capt. Edward
Gibbons of Boston in New England, in part of requitall
whereof, and for our tender love & good respect that wee
do beare to Jotham Gibbons sonne & heyer apparent of the
said Capt. Gibbons, do hereby of or owne motion & accord
give & grant unto the said Jotham Gibbons, the reversion
of all that parcell of land, wch lyes against the ponds
at Misticke aforesaid together with the said ponds
all wch we reserved from Charlstowne & Cambridge late
called New Towne, and all hereditaments & appurtenances
there unto belonging, after the death of mee the said Squa
Sachem, to have & to hold the said reversion of the
said parcell of lands & ponds, & all & singular the
premises with appurtenances unto the said Jotham Gibbons
his heyres & assignes for evr. In witnes whereof we have
here unto set or hands & seals the 13th of the 11th.mo.
In the yeare so declared by Christians 1639. & in the feftenth
yeare of the Reighne of King Charles of England.
Willing that these be recorded before or much
Honourd ffreinds the Govr of the Massachusetts Bay in
New England, & the rest of the magistrates
there, for perpetuall remembrance of this thing.
Signed sealed & delivered

The Squa Sachems
mark  & a
seale

In presence off.
Robert Lucar
Edmund Quinsey
Robert Gillum.

Webcowitts marke. 
& a seale

This writeing is acknowledged to be the deed of Squa
Sachems & Webcowitts, & the marks & seales,
thereunto affixed to be their marks & seals, &
have manifested & explyained the bounds of the
said grant or deed to be distinct from the land

which was given to the Govr. Mr. Nowell. Mr. Wilson, & Capt. Gibbons, Benedict Arnold being interprtr. & that they did not sell it to Charles-towne. 4.(7) 43.

In the prsence of us
Jno. Winthrop .Govr. Jno. Endecott. Dept. Govr
Richard Saltonstall, Thomas flint.

Recorded. 3.6.43. By William Aspinwall Recdr.
Entred & Recorded. 23. (8) 1656.
By Thomas Danforth Recordr

Extracted out of the Register of Deeds & conveyances at Cambr. in the Coun of Midd in New Engl. Lib. 2. pag. 157. & is a true copy being compared & Examined.
By Thomas Danforth Recordr.

(on the back of the same piece of paper:)

This testifies that I the Squa Sachem wch have right & possession of the ground wch I reserved from Charlestowne and Cambridge, wch lyes agst the ponds at misticke, with the said ponds, I do give freely to Jotham Gibbons, his heyres excecutors and Assignes for evr, not willing to have him or his disturbed in the said gift after my death, & this I do wth out seeking too of him or any of his, though they have ben put upon it many times, but I receive my many kindnesses, by this small gift to their sonne Jotham Gibbons, witnes my hand the 13th of the 11th mo. 36. the Squa Sachems

Webicowits

marke

marke

witnesse
Edmund Quinsey.

Entred & recorded. 23.(8)1656
By Thomas Danforth Recordr

Extracted out of the Register of Deeds & conveyances at Cambridge in the coun of Midd. in New England Lib.2.page 156.& is a true copy being compared By Thomas Danforth Recordr.

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Columbia Point, Morrissey Blvd., Boston, Massachusetts, April 1989.

1661/2 - folio 29 - group 4

Edward Converse aged 71 or thereabouts, saith that
about one or two & twenty years since, Major
Gibbons came to the Select men of Charlestowne
with a complaint in Squa Sachems behalfe, that
Charlestowne had taken her land, & gave her
nothing for it, upon which complaint the Select
men requested the Hond. Mr. Increase Nowell
Mr. Palmr Mr. Walter Palmr & my selfe to go &
treat wth Squa Sachem abt buying her lands, wch we
did & bought all the land wth in the prcincts of
Charlestowne granted by the genall Court, only this
land in controversie excepted, wch shee reserved for her
life, for to plant & hunt upon, & we gave her wt
shee demanded, & two coates a yeare dureing her
life, upon Major Gibbons his request, & shee dismissed
all the Indians from her lands at her decease.
at this prsent shee made a deed of gift to the Hond
Mr. Jno. Winthrop, Mr. Increase Nowell, Mr. Jno. Wilson
& Major Edward Gibbons, of all the land shee
had between Watertowne & neer Salim
in wch this land in controversie was included
as I undrstood Major Gibbons who was then the in
terprter. After this sevrall of Charlestowne
complained, that they feared their land would be
made coppie hold, & therefore sent my selfe wth
another to the aforementioned Gentlemen
respectively to desire them to give up their rites
to charlestowne, wch they did Major Gibbons only
excepted, this is the whole truth so farr as I can
rememb.
And further I Edward Convers do testifie, that at
the same time above expressed, Major Edward
Gibbons did say that Squa Sachem had sevrall
times offered to give him land, but he durst
accept none.

Sworne in Court 4.(2) 1660

Attests Thomas Danforth Recordr

Deva Copia as attests Thomas Danforth. R.

(on the back of the same piece of paper:)

Edward Converse
testimony

Middlesex County Court Files, held by Massachusetts Archives at
Columbia Point, Morrissey Blvd., Boston, Massachusetts, April 1989.

1661/2 - folio 29 - group 4

Edward Johnson aged 60: years witnesseth.
That abt one or two & twenty years agoe
this deponant being at the wigwam of Squa
Sachem there was prsent mr Increase Nowell
Major Edward Gibbons Leift. Sprague, & Edward
Converse, & some others of Charlestowne, at
wch time according to the interpretation of
her & her husbands meaneing by the above named
Major Edward Gibbons they did grant & sell unto
Charlestowne, all their land within the limitts of
Charlestowne, except that on the west side of the
ponds called Misticke, where their wigwam then
stood, wch they reserved for term of her life &
after her decease they did then declare it should
come & remaine to Jno. Winthrop Esqr. Mr.
Increase Nowell, Mr. Jno. Wilson & the above
named Major Edw. Gibbons, & the persons &
contract this deponant at his returne home, did
enter into his day booke for remembrance yt of
this is ye whole truth remembred so sayth
Edward Johnson.

Sworne in court. 4. (2) 1660.

as attests Thomas Danforth Recordr.

Deva Copia. Thomas Danforth. R.

As it known unto All men by these presents, that wee holding
of the Squa Sachem of mistike, wife of the said M^o Cowdy
having to mind & well considering the many kindnes &
benefits we have received from the hands of Capt. Edward
Gibbons of Boston in New England in part of a quitall
whereof, and for our tender love & good respect that wee
do beare to Jotham Gibbons Sonne & Heire apparent of the
said Capt. Gibbons, do hereby of our owne motion & accord
give & grant unto the said Jotham Gibbons, the possession
of all that partoll of land, with lye against the ponds
at mistike aforesaid together with the said ponds
All w^{ch} we received from Charlestowne & Cambridge late
called New Downe, and all Hereditaments & appurtenances
there unto belonging, after the death of mee the said Squa
Sachem, do have & to give the said possession of the
said partoll of lands & ponds, & all & singular the
appurtenances ^{with} appurtenances unto the said Jotham Gibbons
his Heires & assigns for ever. In witness whereof we have
here unto set our hand & seal the 13th Day of the 11th mo.
In the year so declared by Christians 1639. & in the fifteenth
year of the Reigne of King Charles of England &c.
Willing that these be Recorded, Before & much
Honour & favour the Gov^r of the Massachusetts Bay
in New England, & the rest of the magistrats
there, for perpetuall remembrance of this being.

Signed sealed & delivered

In presence of

Robert Lucas.

Edmund Quincy.

Robert Gillum.

The Squa Sachem

mark A & a
scale

M^o Cowitts mark. ☐

& a scale

This writing is acknowledged to be the deed of Squa
Sachem & M^o Cowitts, & the mark & scale,
therunto affixed to be their mark & scale, &
have manifested & explained the bounds of the
said grant or deed to be distinct from the land

which was given to the Gov^r. Mr. Nowell, Mr
H. Dixon, & Capt. Gibbons, Bonavent Arnold being
intercepted. & that they did not sell it to Charley-
Downe. 4-67) 43.

In the presence of
Jno. Hathorn Gov^r. Jno. Endicott. Dep Gov^r
Richard Saltonstall, Thomas Flint.

Recorded. 3-6-43. By William Aspinwall.

Entered & Recorded. 23. (8) 1656.

By Thomas Dauforty, Records

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of the ground wh I received from Charlestowne and
Cambridge, with by asst the ponds at misfitts, with
the said ponds, I do give freely to Joham Gibbons, his Heire
Executors & Assignes for ever, not willing to have him or
his disturbed in the said gift after my deathe, & this
I do wth out looking too of him or any of his, though
they have ben put upon it many times, but I wth out
neglecting my kindness of them, am willing to acknow-
ledge their many kindness, by this small gift to give
some Joham Gibbons, witness my hand the 13th
of the 11th mo. 36. The Squa Sachem I make
witness
Edmund Quincy.

Entered & Recorded. 23. (8) 1696.

By Thomas Danforth Recordy.

Extracted out of the Register of Deeds & conveyances
at Cambridge in the County of midd. in New England
lib. 1. page. 156. & is a true copy being
compared By Thomas Danforth Recordy.